

REMARKS

There are now pending in this application claims 1-3 and 5-7, of which claim 1 is independent. Claim 4 has been cancelled without prejudice or waiver of its subject matter. No claims have been added.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

Applicants submit herewith a replacement sheet for Figure 6. This replacement sheet labels Figure 6 as --Prior Art-- in accordance with the Examiner's requirements. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully sought.

Applicants have also made a number of minor amendments to the specification. These amendments include the informalities cited by the Examiner as well as other noted informalities. No new matter has been entered. Accordingly, favorable consideration and entry of the amendments to the specification is respectfully sought.

As now set forth in independent claim 1, the invention is directed to an image heating apparatus with a conveying roller and heat supply means which supplies heat to the conveying roller, the heat supply means being in contact with an external periphery of the conveying roller to form a heating nip portion. Backup means are also provided so as to form a conveying nip portion in cooperation with the conveying roller. The invention is characterized in that in a rotating direction of the conveying roller, the heating nip portion has a width larger than a width of the conveying nip portion and a total pressure applied to the conveying nip portion is larger than a total pressure applied to the heating nip portion. As amended, the invention is also characterized in that the heat supply means includes a heat generating member, a holder for

supporting the heat generating member, and a flexible rotary member nipped between the conveying roller and the heat generating member and rotating around the holder. The heat nip portion is formed between the heat generating member and the conveying roller and between the holder and the conveying roller.

Each of claims 1-7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Izawa et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0118363). In view of the above amendments the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As a result of the above mentioned characterizing features of the invention as recited in claim 1, the heating nip portion which has a width larger than the width of the conveying portion and which has the total pressure smaller than the total pressure of the conveying nip portion is provided. As a result, the present invention provides for an image heating apparatus which is capable of reducing the start-up time necessary to generate temperatures sufficient to heat the image satisfactorily and which is therefore capable of assuring good fixing properties.


Izawa et al. relates to an image heating apparatus which includes a rotatable member, backup means for cooperating with the rotatable member and heating means for heating an outer peripheral surface of the rotatable member, with the heating means including a heater in the form of a plate cooperable with the rotatable member to form a heating nip. However, Izawa et al. does not teach or suggest forming the heating nip portion between a holder for supporting the heat generating member and the fixing roller, the fixing roller being understood to correspond to roller 10 in at least Figure 1. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Izawa et al. does not teach or suggest the invention as recited in claim 1 as amended.

Claims 2, 3, and 5-7 each depend from claim 1 and are therefore believed patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to claim 1. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding matters in the above application have been addressed and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the above application are respectfully sought.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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